

**Food Safety Guidance**

**Running a Food Business from Home**

This guidance note is intended for anyone who plans to run a food business from their domestic premises. This may include preparing foodstuffs to sell in your own shop or market stall, directly to customers, via the internet or to other businesses. Running a home food business can be an attractive opportunity but carries a great amount of responsibility.

The law on food safety for a business from home is the same as any other commercial operation. Officers from the Food & Safety team will carry out inspections, and you may face legal action if you break food safety laws.

**Registration**

If you are planning to run a food business from your home kitchen you will be required to register with the Food & Safety team at least 28 days before you plan to start. There is no fee and an application form is available on the [Falkirk Council website](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/law-licensing/licensing/food-safety/food-business-registration.aspx).

**Planning Permission**

You may need to obtain planning permission to run a business from home so you should take advice from our Planning Department at [dc@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:dc@falkirk.gov.uk).

**Business Rates**

You may have to pay increased rates if you use part of your property for a business. You should contact the [Assessors for Central Scotland](https://www.saa.gov.uk/central/) for further advice at [assessor@centralscotland-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:assessor@centralscotland-vjb.gov.uk).

**Insurance**

You should advise your insurance company if you are running a business from your home to ensure you are fully covered.

**Restrictive Covenants**

Especially in older properties, you may find the Deeds contain clauses that prevent you from carrying out certain activities and running a food business may be one of them. You should speak to your solicitor for advice.

**Rented Properties**

If you are in a rented property you should contact your landlord. For Falkirk Council properties you should speak to your Neighbourhood Officer.

**Mortgage Restrictions**

If you have a mortgage on your property you must contact your lender and discuss your intentions.

**Structure**

Domestic kitchens are not always designed for commercial use and may need some alterations to comply with food safety laws. Common problems include inadequate sinks and wash hand basins, toilets leading directly into the kitchen area, decorative finishes which are not easily cleaned, insufficient storage or refrigeration capacity, inadequate work space to control cross contamination etc. The standards you will have to meet depend on the type and quantity of food you intend to prepare, and what else the kitchen is used for.

As a general principal, if you prepare **high risk foods** then the standards required will be much greater than that of a business dealing with low-risk foodstuffs. High-risk foods are ready-to-eat foods which under favourable conditions, support the multiplication of pathogenic bacteria and are intended for consumption without treatment which would destroy such organisms. These foods are typically high in protein, requiring protection and refrigerated storage. They include:

* Cooked meat and poultry
* Cooked meat products including gravy and stock
* Milk, cream, artificial cream, custards and dairy produce
* Cooked eggs and egg products
* Shellfish and other seafoods such as oysters
* Cooked rice

You should discuss your intentions with an Officer from the Food & Safety team.

**Lighting**

Adequate lighting is necessary to provide a safe working environment and to facilitate the hygienic preparation of food.

**Ventilation**

Adequate ventilation is necessary to remove fumes and steam and to keep your premises cool.

**Equipment**

All equipment should be safe to use, in good order, clean and should be capable of being thoroughly cleaned.

**Wash Facilities**

At least one sink must be provided for washing purposes. Depending on the food you are intending to prepare two sinks may be required to enable cleaning and then disinfection. Alternatively a dishwasher may be accepted.

**Hand Washing Facilities**

A separate facility must be provided for hand washing purposes, reasonably accessible from the kitchen. If high risk foods are being prepared, a wash hand basin is likely to be required within the kitchen, separate to the sinks used for washing food/equipment. This facility must be provided with hot and cold water, liquid soap and hygienic hand drying facilities.

**Toilet Facilities**

Facilities used by persons engaged in the handling of food for public consumption must be in good repair and maintained in a clean condition. Toilets must not to open directly into food preparation areas; an intervening space is required.

**Refuse Storage**

Waste stored in the kitchen must be in a clean bin with a close fitting lid. Outdoor refuse storage must be kept clean and tidy.

**Pest Control**

The premises must be free from rodent and insect infestation and proofed to reduce the risk of such infestation.

**Temperature Control**

Food within a refrigerator should be below 5oC. Frozen food in the freezer should be at -18oC or lower. Thermometers must be available to monitor the temperatures in these appliances. Ideally, separate refrigerators/freezers should be used for domestic and commercial foods.

**Pets**

Pets and their food should be kept well away from all food preparation and storage areas at all times.

**First Aid**

First aid materials must be provided for the use within the kitchen in the form of waterproof plaster, bandages, and dressings. You don’t have to provide blues plasters by law, but these are recommended.

**Personal Hygiene**

Food handlers must wear clean, washable clothing and must maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness.

**Washing machines**

Ideally washing machines should be sited away from food preparation and storage areas. However, if there is no alternative, an agreement may be reached with the Officer that the machine may be used provided its use is confined to times when food is not being prepared.

**Water Supply**

Only potable (wholesome) water is to be used. If your water is not supplied by mains water (i.e. it’s a private water supply sourced from a burn, stream, well, borehole) you must advise your Officer.

**HACCP**

All food businesses are required to put in place a [Food Safety Management System](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/environment/food-safety/food-safety-management-systems.aspx). You must ensure that controls are put in place to control food safety risks and monitor them to make sure they are working. This should be proportionate to the nature and size of the business.

**Training**

Food business operators must ensure that all food handlers (including themselves) are adequately supervised, instructed and/or trained commensurate to the tasks of staff and be appropriate for the work carried out. This may mean undertaking some form of formal food hygiene training.

**Allergens**

Food business operators must provide information to their customers about the allergens in their food. Further information can be accessed at [Food allergy guidance for businesses | Food Standards Scotland | Food Standards Scotland](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/business-and-industry/safety-and-regulation/food-allergies-2).

**Labelling and composition**

Depending on the food you are producing and the manner of sale, there may be additional labelling requirements or requirements in terms of the composition of the food. Further information can be found at [Food labelling regulations & composition | Food Standard Scotland | Food Standards Scotland](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/business-and-industry/safety-and-regulation/labelling).

Further advice is available within the [Food Safety section](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/environment/food-safety/) of the Falkirk Council website.

**Please note that the above mentioned list is not exhaustive and other works specific to any particular premises may be necessary.**

**An Officer will be happy to contact you and advise accordingly. You can contact the Food & Safety team at** [**fs@falkirk.gov.uk**](mailto:fs@falkirk.gov.uk)**.**